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ABSTRACT

A long-range, statewide, collaborative action plan for business/education cooperation is presented in this document. Prepared by a steering committee of the Pennsylvania Business Roundtable, the plan focuses on four major areas--educational goals, social and financial issues, school management, and school operation. Business action is recommended at three levels of involvement: direct school/business interaction; indirect support; and support at the local, state, and federal levels. Specific recommendations for improving education within each of the four main areas are offered. Appendices include the bibliography, steering committee conclusions, and Definitions for Youth Career/Life Skill Competencies (from The Pittsburgh Promise). (60 references) (LMI)

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Pennsylvania Business Roundtable

Suggested Action Plan for Business/Education Cooperation in Pennsylvania

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Suggested Action Plan for Business/Education Cooperation in Pennsylvania

August, 1990

The Pennsylvania Business Roundtable is a non-profit, non-partisan association of executives from among major corporations headquartered in Pennsylvania or maintaining significant facilities in the state. The PBR works cooperatively with associations, groups and institutions which seek to promote economic growth and development, private sector employment and fiscal responsibility in the Commonwealth. Permission to reproduce this report is granted.

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Prompted by the changing nature of Pennsylvania's workforce, the Labor/Management Subcommittee of the Pennsylvania Business Roundtable called a public meeting on November 15, 1989 on "Pennsylvania's Human Resources." As a result of that meeting, a Steering Committee was formed and charged with the objective to:

> Draft a long-range, statewide, collaborative action plan for business/education cooperation to help schools prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.

This document, prepared by the Steering Committee, serves as a basis for meeting this objective and may be modified at a later date to incorporate new ideas.

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To be competitive in an increasingly global marketplace, Pennsylvania business needs a motivated, well-educated workforce prepared to cope with continuing economic and technological change through life-long learning.

The job market continues to change with slower growth in manufacturing and faster growth in the service sector. Both areas will require higher skilled employees than in the past.

There will be fewer new entrants into the labor force, and they will have backgrounds quite different from those in the past. By the year 2000, only one in six new entrants will be a United States born white male. Women, minorities and recent immigrants will be the overwhelming majority.

BUT . . .

Some 20 percent of 18-year-olds are functionally illiterate and essentially unemployable. Not only are they lost to an increasingly tight labor market, they impose a large cost on society.

Academic skills of graduating American high school students, on average, compare poorly with those from other developed and some developing nations.

The Steering Committee

Committee members represented diverse backgrounds and constituencies with a stake in education. They were:

E. Peter Benzing, Chairman
Bayer USA
(Retired Vice President)

Jonathan Bauer
Teacher
Harrisburg School System

Terry Barnaby
Assistant Executive Director
PA State Education Association

Raymond Beisel
Professor
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Nancy Bunt
Director, Education Fund
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John Dankosky
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State Board of Education
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Albert Fondy
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Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers

David Kirkpatrick
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Joseph V. Oravitz
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Director of Issues Management
Duquesne Light Company

Floyd Warner
President
Red Lion Tours

It should not be surprising that the committee's conclusions and recommendations parallel those reached by others in recent years. We have concentrated on four major areas that must be addressed to gain significant and lasting improvement in primary and secondary education:

- Educational Goals
- Social and Financial Issues
- School Management
- School Operation

In each of these areas, we recommend business action at three different levels of involvement:

- Direct interaction between business enterprises and schools.

- Indirect support through encouraging and rewarding employee involvement in education.

- Advocacy or sound educational and social programs at the local, state and federal level.

The following is a listing of the entire report's recommendations. For proper context and understanding, it is important that the report be read in its entirety.

- Business should promote local and state development of goals by clarifying its needs in the context of the larger needs of society.

- Business and schools should schedule programs where students, teachers and administrators regularly visit diverse businesses and business people visit schools to create awareness of the many different available career options. Such contacts would also make students more aware of the importance of their studies.

- Business should strengthen cooperation with vocational schools to ensure that their programs are up-to-date and lead to the development of meaningful skills.

- Business and schools should investigate programs that would begin an apprenticeship in high school and lead to full employment after high school graduation.

- Business will need all of today's children in its future workforce. Therefore, it should now support substantial increases in early childhood programs that prepare high-risk children for entry into public schools. It would appear that at least some resources for such programs could come from better coordination and integration of existing local, state and federal social and educational programs. A comprehensive study of the cost effectiveness of existing programs in Pennsylvania should be initiated and become the basis for reallocation of funds.

- Business should support equitable funding of public schools across Pennsylvania through advocacy at the state level. If this requires that additional funds be provided through increased taxation, business support for such taxation should be contingent on structural reforms recommended in this report.

- No data are available on comparative educational outcomes and the quality of graduates from rural school systems. In view of their importance in Pennsylvania, a specific study of rural school districts by the state should be encouraged.

- Business should seek representation on the State Board of Education and participate in reworking state regulations. Support should be given to having the state establish required results and evaluating schools by how well these are achieved. Successul outcomes should be rewarded with greater self-government, reduced regulation and incentive bonuses.

- Business should support diverse parental options through the development of alternative educational pathways and making them available as magnet programs in existing school systems. Outcomes should be monitored and successes rewarded and copied.

- Business can catalyze change by sharing with schools their experience with successful management programs in improving quality and productivity by giving greater authority and accountability to those directly doing the work.

- Business should support employees who participate in school government and are members of school boards. Such support may range from simple recognition to periods of paid leave of absence. Employers should also encourage employees who are parents to take an active interest in their children's schools.

- Business should advocate more reasonable disclosure requirements for school board members and a lengthening of the term to six years.

- Business should support establishing statewide criteria by which individuals from outside the educational establishment can qualify as teachers, principals and superintendents. At the local level, business should offer managerial support to school systems, including management training for principals and superintendents.

- State requirements for continuing professional development of teachers should be strengthened, enforced and adequately funded.

- Business should request transcripts of school records before offering employment to students or recent high school graduates. In the case of part-time employed students, employers should monitor the students' scholastic records and insist on at least passing grades as a condition of continued employment.

- Business should sponsor partnerships with schools, including tutoring and mentoring efforts, particularly in communities with large numbers of at-risk children.

- Business should encourage employees to visit their children's schools, to learn about occupational opportunities and to discuss appropriate curriculum options with their teachers.

Today, many schools do not meet the diverse demands of society. But to put the problem in perspective, we should consider the enormous societal change that has occurred in this century, how it has accelerated in the last 25 years and how it has altered the requirements we place on our schools.

In 1900, only 6.4 percent of students graduated from high school; in 1989, that percentage had grown to over 70.

At the turn of the century, the United States was still a largely agrarian society entering the industrial age. In the last 25 years, many of the agricultural and manufacturing jobs requiring physical labor and little scholastic aptitude have disappeared. Instead, the demand for skilled manufacturing and service manpower continues to rise.

The change from a national to an international marketplace has accelerated with manufacturing competition now coming not only from other developed countries, but also from newly developing nations with modern educational and manufacturing bases and low labor costs.

American society, which was dominated by a white European culture at the turn of the century, is rapidly developing a multi-racial, multi-ethnic culture in which whites may become a minority by the end of the next century. Schools have had to bear the brunt of the necessary integration effort.

Traditional family structures and values have been eroded over the last 25 years, reducing substantially the socializing influence of the home. Drug and alcohol abuse are additional new problems that schools are required to deal with today.

Is it really surprising that a school system that has seen little structural change in over 100 years has problems responding to such fundamental shifts?

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Steering Committee held five one-day meetings between January and May 1990 and reviewed a large number of publications on the subject of public school education in the United States (see Appendix 1). Conclusions and recommendations for action were documented and reviewed after each meeting to reach general agreement among all members. In the following, we have organized the material under broad headings with recommended business actions indicated. For details, one should refer to the 49 specific items shown as "Steering Committee Minutes" in Appendix 2.

Educational Goals

The educational goals of the business community are the same as those of society at large. Primary and secondary education must enable students to accept responsibility in the workplace and as citizens in a democracy. As a minimum goal, all students must acquire reading, writing and arithmetic skills, but the committee stressed the importance of teaching values and social skills that prepare students for cooperative work with others. For a comprehensive summary, see the "Definitions for Youth Career/Life Skill Competencies" recommended by The Pittsburgh Promise (Appendix 3).

Business should promote local and state development of goals by clarifying its needs in the context of the larger needs of society.

Many students, and even teachers and guidance counselors, are not aware of the wide range of occupations available and how the curricula relate to the working world.

Business and schools should schedule programs where students, teachers and administrators regularly visit diverse businesses and business people visit schools to create awareness of the many different available career options. Such contacts would also make students more aware of the importance of their studies.

Schools should recognize that only some 25 percent of students will graduate from college but almost all will require some form of post-secondary education or training. Accordingly, once basic competencies have been acquired, options should be provided that take advantage of students' individual strengths and learning styles. In particular, it was felt that many students who are "hands on" learners are not performing to their potential in academically oriented curricula when they would do well in more practical programs with a strong relation to the working world. There needs to be a closer link between academic· basic learning skills, analytic and problem-solving skills and occupation-related skills.

Business should strengthen cooperation with vocational schools to ensure that their programs are up-to-date and lead to the development of meaningful skills.

Business and schools should investigate programs that would begin at apprenticeship in high school and lead to full employment after high school graduation.

Adverse social conditions are considered to be the most serious barrier to scholastic improvement for the majority of the lowest performing students. Teenage pregnancy, single-parent families, substandard housing, poor nutrition and health care, crime, alcohol and drug abuse all have substantial negative influences on children's readiness and ability to learn, leaving many of them unprepared even for kindergarten. These children become the bulk of the later drop-outs, future unemployed and welfare cases and will represent the majority of the future prison population. Teachers have neither the training nor the time to repair the damage done in the early years.

Business will need all of today's children in its future work force. Therefore, it should now support substantial increases in early childhood programs that prepare high-risk children for entry into public schools. It would appear that at least some resources for such progams could come from better coordination and integration of existing local, state and federal social and educational programs. A comprehensive study of the cost effectiveness of existing programs in Pennsylvania should be initiated and become the basis for reallocation of funds.

It seems probable that this is a classic case where "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" and that overall social costs could decrease and educational outcome improve through early intervention.

In contrast to virtually all developed nations, the United States still maintains a highly decentralized public school system with local sources accounting for 56 percent of overall funding in our state. This leads to significant disparities in expenditure per student among the state's 500 school systems. Worse, those districts with the most severe social problems tend to have the least resources. Court decisions have ordered a number of other states with similar disparities to revise their funding of education toward greater equity. Apart from the possibility of legal action, enlightened self-interest in improving education should lead Pennsylvania to review its funding system.

Business should support equitable funding of public schools across Pennsylvania through advocacy at the state level. If this requires that additional funds be provided through increased taxation, business support for such taxation should be contingent on structural reforms recommended in this report.

Rural school districts tend to have a comparatively weak tax base and face economic problems similar to other districts when the state cuts back support. They face additional unique problems stemming from their low population density and lack of strong business presence.

But no data are available on comparative educational outcomes and the quality of graduates from rural school systems may well be positively affected by their stronger family and community environment. In view of their importance in Pennsylvania, a specific study of rural school districts by the state should be encouraged.

Public schools are highly regulated institutions. However, what is regulated is usually the INPUT. But the thrust of much present thinking on school restructuring is toward freeing schools from much of this input-oriented regulation and shifting the emphasis to making schools ACCOUNTABLE for the OUTCOME.

Business should seek representation on the State Board of Education and participate in reworking state regulations. Support should be given to having the state establish required results and evaluating schools by how well these are achieved. Successful outcomes should be rewarded with greater self-government, reduced regulation and incentive bonuses.

Increasingly, parents are demanding a stronger voice in the management and operation of their children's schools. In cases of extreme dissatisfaction with schools' performance, "schools of choice" have been instituted to force change by introducing an element of competition among schools. There exists little long-term experience with such systems, and they are strongly opposed by most educators and teachers' unions. On the other hand, there has been considerable evolutionary change in many schools, some of it catalyzed by cooperation of business with school systems. Such "Magnet Schools" offer students and parents a greater choice among educational pathways within existing schools and school systems. Examples in Pennsylvania include the Pittsburgh School System and the Philadelphia High School Academies, both of which have received national recognition.

Business should support diverse parental options through the development of alternative educational pathways and making them available as magnet programs in existing school systems. Outcomes should be monitored and successes rewarded and copied.

When it comes to teacher qualification, motivation and rewards, it has to be recognized that these issues are to a large extent governed by collective bargaining agreements at the local level. Union leaders on the Steering Committee recognized that incentives are as important in schools as they are in business. While they reject differential pay based on teacher performance and specific skills, they point to other types of incentives attractive to teachers. In successful schools, freeing the principal/teacher teams to run their schools more autonomously, and being judged by the outcome and rewarded with incentive bonuses, appeals to their professionalism.

These thoughts resemble developments in business during the last decade where managements have been successful in improving quality and productivity by giving greater authority and accountability to those directly doing the work. Business can catalyze change by sharing their experience with such programs with schools.

School boards, the link between the public and schools, have been weakened by a number of factors. With fewer families having school-age children, there is less interest in education. Increasing demands in the workplace, two parents working and more single parents, reduce the number of potential candidates for school boards. Laws forcing disclosure of personal and financial information that has no bearing on qualification have discouraged qualified candidates. The shortening of the term from six to four years and a high turnover rate make it difficult to maintain long-term continuity.

Business should support employees who participate in school government and are members of school boards. Such support may range from simple recognition to periods of paid leave of absence. Employers should also encourage employees who are parents to take an active interest in their children's schools.

Business should advocate more reasonable disclosure requirements for school board members and a lengthening of their term to six years.

Turnover and an increasing rate of retirement of superintendents and principals will place additional stress on school systems in the next few years. To the extent that these positions are primarily management positions, they could also be filled by qualified individuals from outside the educational establishment.

Business should support establishing statewide criteria by which individuals from outside the educational establishment can qualify as teachers, principals and superintendents. At the local level, business should offer managerial support to school systems, including management training for principals and superintendents.

Every effort should be made to keep good teachers in the classroom. Enlarging their responsibility by giving them a voice in the self-government of their school, involving them in continuing professional development of younger teachers, having them participate in professional activities and conferences and communication with peers from other districts, all would support that effort.

State requirements for continuing professional development of teachers should be strengthened, enforced and adequately funded.

Schools should develop clear goals and objectives and criteria by which they can be held accountable. Their operation on a day to day basis should then be left to principals and teachers who should be held responsible for the outcome. It is important that the evaluation of the outcome be on a fair basis, taking into account not only the level of student achievement compared to established goals, but also the advancement made over time.

The emphasis has to be on evaluating students for competencies acquired, not on how many hours they have been exposed to a subject. Students should only be advanced when they can pass "competency gates" set for specific knowledge or skill.

Teachers are often the key persons in the intellectual development of a child. They should be enabled to develop longer term and closer relationships with their students to allow for more individualized evaluation and counseling.

Outside influences, including those by business, have an important influence on students' attitudes. Students must realize that their performance in school matters.

Business should request transcripts of school records before offering employment to students or recent high school graudates. In the case of part-time employed students, employers should monitor the students' scholastic records and insist on at least passing grades as a condition of continued employment.

Business should sponsor partnerships with schools, including tutoring and mentoring efforts, particularly in communities with large numbers of at-risk children.

Business should encourage employees to visit their children's schools, to learn about occupational opportunities and to discuss appropriate curriculum options with their teachers.

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Conclusions Drawn From Steering Committee Meetings

There is no difference between the educational goals of business and industry and of society as a whole. Everyone would like to see primary and secondary education result in literate, broadly educated individuals who accept responsibility in the workplace and as citizens.

The minimum goal of public schools must be to have all students acquire essential core competencies, broadly the "3 Rs", and a set of values and social skills that enable them to work cooperatively with others. For a more detailed representative list, see the "Definitions of Youth Career/Life Skill Competencies" established by The Pittsburgh Promise. For the majority of students, this should be achieved by the 8th grade. Advancement according to individual talent, skill and interest should be encouraged, including a strengthened vocational option.

Curricula need to place more emphasis on interdisciplinary relations and encourage teacher teamwork.

Curricula should be geared to real-life situations to capture the interest of students. With competency gates the true measure of outcome, teachers can be empowered to tailor their approach to their individual student body.

Eighty percent of jobs will not require a college degree, but most will require some post-secondary education, according to Fred A. Monaco, Director of Career and Vocational Education, Board of Education, Pittsburgh. Yet schools are still structured largely toward the 20 percent who go into academic careers. In fact, in 1989 vocational education was the only education area receiving less Pennsylvania state support than in prior years.

Vocational education offers an opportunity to satisfying and productive careers. In particular, it was felt that many students who are "hands-on" learners are not performing to their potential in academically oriented curricula when they would do well in more practical programs with a strong relation to the working world. It has suffered in recent years from a number of problems, among them the increased emphasis on academic achievement,

declining school enrollment, difficulties to keep up with developing new technologies, lack of coordination with the knowledge of job opportunities and lack of equipment and facilities, particularly in rural areas.

Vocational education offers business a particularly good opportunity to work with schools. Business should explore additional possibilities for linking apprenticeship programs for 10th to 12th grade students with school curricula that would allow students to graduate with a high school diploma linking core competencies with specific and useful working skills acquired with an employer.

Social and Financial Issues

Societal problems such as teenage pregnancy, single parent families, sub-standard housing, poor nutrition and health care, crime, alcohol and drug abuse have substantial negative influences on children's readiness and ability to learn. These problems are addressed by a multitude of federal, state and local government programs. Better integration of these programs among themselves and with primary and secondary education is needed. A cost/benefit analysis across educational and social spending programs and possible reallocation of funds could improve return on investment.

Early childhood experience may be the most critical factor in determining future scholastic and social success. Potential future dropouts can usually be identified by the 3rd grade. Large class sizes limit teachers' ability to deal effectively with these high-risk children. Reduction in class size and increased emphasis on programs that support healthy development and social adjustment for high-risk children at pre-school age promise cost-effective improvements.

More counseling is needed, particularly in the early years, and parents have to be included.

Traditionally, fundamental values and social skills were taught in families and schools. Strains on families (poverty, drug abuse, single-parent families, two working parents, etc.) have placed a heavy burden on schools. At the same time, the anti-authority movement of the 60's has curtailed teachers' ability to teach social values and norms. While teachers need to be sensitive to the cultural diversity of their students, their authority to insist on compliance with broad social values and norms must be strengthened again.

Some districts in the state have significant numbers of new immigrants requiring special attention. While their different cultural background should be respected and may require specific teacher training, teaching of English

and in English must be stressed as a prerequisite for successful integration.

Having one teacher stay with a class for several years would allow him/her to get to better know each child and would improve the effectiveness of counseling.

Pennsylvania has strong special education programs serving handicapped and gifted students as well as those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. At an average cost of $9000/per student, some question whether too many students are placed in such programs. As has been mentioned before, early identification of special needs is the most cost-effective means to deal with them. Additional special training for teachers teaching these programs may be needed.

Rural school districts tend to have a comparatively weak tax base and face economic problems similar to other districts when the state cuts back support. They face additional unique problems stemming from their low population density and lack of strong business presence. But no data are available on comparative educational outcomes and the quality of graduates from rural school systems. Students may well be positively affected by their stronger family and community environment. In view of their importance in Pennsylvania, a specific study of rural school districts by the state should be encouraged.

In looking at school problems, one recognizes roughly four "generically" different types of school environments: inner city, suburban, rural and, as a special case, precipitously declined former middle class, e.g., the Mon Valley.

Resources available per student show large differences among different school districts; generally those most in need have the least.

To attract top talent to the teaching profession, teachers' authority, responsibility and accountability must be increased along with professional wages. Across the state, salaries vary widely among school districts with no discernible relation to qualification. Within individual districts, salaries are set by collective bargaining.

School Management

Community indifference is one of the major obstacles to school improvement. With fewer families having school-

age children, there is less interest in and support of education. Schools need to be more aggressive in communicating their vital role, their accomplishments and their problems to the public at large to build a broader relationship with their communities. This is an area where business can help.

Expanding the school year beyond the presently mandated 180 days is currently considered impractical in view of the enormous funding increase it would require and the doubtful return of this added investment. The summer recess should instead be used for remedial and enrichment programs with attention to making these accessible to all students. Here is an opportunity for business to actively support community programs.

Laws forcing disclosure of personal and financial information that has no bearing on qualification have discouraged participation on school boards. The need to be reelected every four years, combined with a 30 percent turnover rate, makes it difficult to retain well informed members. Business should advocate a return to the six-year term and more reasonable disclosure requirements.

"Schools of Choice" are presently advanced as a radical departure from school systems based on residence and have been introduced in several parts of the country. To the extent that this concept opens the system to diversity and gives students and parents more of a voice in selecting curricula, it has received support from parts of the business community. On the other side, many in the educational establishment have warned that if the concept is carried to the point where it transcends existing school districts, it is impractical logistically and would leave impoverished areas even further behind. "Magnet Schools" have been chosen in several places as a successful alternative to give parents and students a greater choice among educational pathways while maintaining equity within existing school systems. Since faculties are actively participating in developing alternative curricula, this model has teacher support. Examples in Pennsylvania include the Philadelphia High School Academies and the Pittsburgh School System. A proper role for business in our state may be to advocate building on these successes while strengthening the accountability of schools.

We discussed the issues of teacher qualification, motivation, accountability and rewards. At the outset, it has to be recognized that these issues are, to a large extent,

governed by collective bargaining at the local level. Teachers' representatives feel that introducing competitive elements such as differential pay based on teacher performance and specific teaching skills would detract from team work within a school. They acknowledge, however, that higher starting salaries are needed to attract teachers with scarce qualifications, e.g., mathematics and sciences. Teachers' representatives also question the ability of many principals to fairly evaluate teachers. They are, however, receptive to rewarding particularly successful schools as teams through grants, including incentive bonuses. Most of all, they feel that business can play a constructive role by supporting teacher professionalism through recognition in the community, through grants for innovative projects and through partnerships with individual schools.

There is agreement that school strikes should only be a weapon of last resort. They divide the community and are detrimental to the spirit of cooperation that is needed to overcome our problems in public education.

Teachers in Pennsylvania, contrary to 43 other states, have the right to strike. The 180-day school requirement effectively protects teachers' salaries from being affected by a strike. Some feel that teachers as well as school boards should put something at risk in a strike; this is the basis for H.B. 1370, presently before the General Assembly. Mandatory fact-finding before a strike has been proposed by some as a means to reduce the number of strikes, but others feel that this would remove a face-saving device that has been used by both sides in settling protracted strikes in the past.

Further investigation into the number of strikes and the effect on schools revealed that less than one half percent of student days have been affected by teacher strikes in the last three years. In view of the fact that strikes thus seem to have, at worst, a minor influence on the educational process but a large potential for polarizing constituencies that have to work together, they do not deserve priority for business attention at the state level.

Attempts at innovation should be encouraged. As an example, school boards and superintendents could negotiate specific educational goals with a school and grant the school a waiver from certain present requirements and regulations contigent upon achieving the goals. Such a system is presently being piloted in Los Angeles and South Carolina.

Administrative burden and expense could be reduced

by giving principals and teachers more autonomy to run their schools. But accountability should be strengthened at the same time.

School boards should avoid micromanagement but should concentrate on long-range objectives. They should hold their superindendents and principals responsible for day-to-day operations.

Turnover of superintendents is a problem. The fact that 50 percent of the present superindendents will retire within the next ten years presents a challenge and an opportunity. Business can support local school districts by assisting in the search for qualified superintendents and by providing management training and support.

Principals occupy a pivotal position in the school sys tem. Their leadership qualities are the key to the establishment of high expectations, to teacher motivation, and teamwork. While they need to be competent to evaluate teacher performance, that does not necessarily require extensive teaching experience. The state should establish criteria by which individuals from outside the educational establishment can qualify as principals.

Communication among the educational community could be improved to support dissemination of information on successful programs, courses, methods, etc., e.g., electronic bulletin boards.

Useful communciation with educational resources outside of the school should be strengthened. Better planned in-service training is needed. Non-teaching days could also serve to have a few teachers access and filter information in their fields for use by their colleagues.

Teachers, like other professionals, must stay current with new developments in their fields (subject matter as well as teaching methods). This requires a certain amount of personal initiative, e.g., keeping up with the literature in their field, participation in professional organizations and communication with peers. Beyond this, school districts should sponsor and require formal professional development at regular intervals.

Business should seek representation on the State Board of Education and attend its meetings. There has been little, if any, business input at past public hearings. Business representatives should actively participate in reworking Chapter 3 (testing), Chapter 5 (curriculum), and

Chapter 6 (vocational education) requirements.

Vocational education, given proper leadership, can be highly successful as presentations by Richard Burley of the Lancaster County System and Fred Monaco of the Pittsburgh System showed. Keys to success were:

- Reestablish pride. Motto: "Twice as good"
- Votech counselors visit schools on regular basis.
- State of the art equipment.
- Cooperation with several school districts.

Votech education needs to link better with both the academic high school curriculum and post secondary education. There must be better cooperation and less competition with community colleges.

Community based business advisory committees can add clout to vocational education. The regional private industry councils should be involved.

The Pennsylvania Advisory Council on Vocational Education is comprised of representatives from business, labor and education, and provides an opportunity to exchange views and offer direction.

School Operation

Students should be advanced according to their demonstrated competencies, not automatically. This calls for a more flexible system in which a student can pass "competency gates" at times when she/he is ready.

A shift in emphasis from the number of hours spent on specific subjects to teaching and testing for competencies should be encouraged.

Objective tests for competence in the "3 Rs" exist and should be used. The appropriate way to evaluate students' attitude and social skills is teachers' and guidance counselors' judgment. Teachers need support in discharging that responsibility.

Teacher evaluation of students' attitudes and behavior are greatly hindered by the large number of students that a teacher has to "process" in limited time. This results in standard checklist evaluations, much inferior to individualized written teacher comments. Teachers should be enabled to develop longer term relationships with their students.

Having one teacher stay with a class for several years would allow him/her to get to better know each child and would improve the effectiveness of counseling.

Teachers could devote more time to teaching if freed from routine clerical tasks. A reasonable amount of clerical support as well as access to telephones, copying machines, etc. for professional purposes should be provided.

Methods for evaluating the performance of schools and teachers must take into account the diversity of student bodies. The focus has to be on relative advancement of students during a term.

Frequently, tests used to assess the performance of schools and teachers do not evaluate what has been taught. While "teaching to the test" must be avoided, the test has to evaluate whether the objective of the curriculum has been reached.

Students must realize that their performance in school does matter. Business should request transcripts from schools and seek teacher references prior to employing students and high school graduates.

Part-time employment, while teaching positive work habits, can also have a negative effect on marginal students' scholastic achievement. Employers of high school students should request and monitor scholastic records and insist on their employees at least maintaining passing grades.

People who are or have been active in business and industry and could serve as teachers in fields where they have specific knowledge should be allowed to teach if they demonstrate the necessary teaching skills.

Business investment in education has to be sustained over the ups and downs of the business cycle to be effective. Business needs to support and reward personal involvement of employees in school governance and administration and teaching. Business should encourage summer intern programs for teachers in business. Business people can serve as mentors to individual students and visit schools to explain to students the relevance of their learning for their future and their careers.

The Pittsburgh Promise

The Pittsburgh Promise is an agreement between the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the Pittsburgh business community, the City of Pittsburgh, and students to provide job preparation support and job access to students in the transition from school to work in return for the students' attaining specified attendance and achievement levels and the schools' guaranteeing that students will have the basic skills employers need for entry level positions.

Definitions for Youth Career/Life Skill Competencies

Positive Attitude & Behavior

Attendance/Punctuality — Arriving at work and school on time every day and adhering to the required schedule.

Personal Health — Caring for one's physical and emotional well-being; avoiding self-destructive behavior.

Hygiene/Grooming/Dress — Knowledge of workplace and community norms and adhering to the written and unwritten dress code and grooming standards of the work and community environments.

Workplace Protocol — Accepting social and workplace norms of conduct and customs, and adhering to these behavior standards of the workplace and community environments.

Flexibility/Adaptability — Alteration of behavior, adjustment of plans or reallocation of resources in response to changes in task requirements to meet the goals of the organization. The ability to perform multiple tasks, analyze and deal with a variety of options.

Volunteerism — Doing more than the minimum requirements of a task; taking on additional responsibilities.

Concern for Quality of Work — Doing the best possible job in all work produced.

Sensitivity to Cultural Similarity and Diversity — To accept, learn about, and work with the unique qualities of all individuals.

Concern for Community's Quality of Life — Accepting the responsibility to enhance the current standards of existence within the community.

Ethical Behavior — Deciding issues and acting upon the principled values of right and wrong.

Stress and Conflict Management — Controlling physical and emotional states of disharmony in order to interact effectively with others.

Communication Skills

Listening — Comprehension of oral information and accurate assessment of it for content, context, and emotional meaning. The ability to plan a course of action or to follow directions from information received.

Speaking — Clear oral expression of ideas, emotions, or facts.

Reading — Comprehension of written text that can then be used to follow directions, address issues or solve problems.

Writing — Communicating in written form ideas and information through analysis, conceptualization, synthesis and distillation of information and the clear, succinct articulation of points and proposals.

Non-verbal — Judgement of the underlying meaning of language through observing physical reactions.

Productivity

Setting Priorities — Evaluation of the relative importance of tasks and the allocation of resources accordingly.

Task Completion/Accountability — Adequate preparation for initiating, undertaking and completing projects, and accepting responsibility for the finished product.

Problem Solving — Recognizing and defining problems and, through utilizing various logical, sequential and divergent thought patterns, to find solutions.

Time Management — Allocating time to accomplish a desired goal.

Self-Direction — Initiating action to solve problems without undue dependence on others.

Teamwork — Working with others to pool various resources representing an array of skills to accomplish tasks.

Cooperation — Contributing to the efforts of others as they pursue their goals.

Positive Response to Supervision/Ability to Follow Directions — The understanding that the role of the supervisor is to organize employees' time and skills, delegate responsibilities, provide necessary support to accomplish the task and to be willing to follow the supervisor's directions.

Leadership — Defining a vision and communicating that vision to others in such a way as to enhance and maximize the cooperation of others.

Quantitative Skills

Read, construct and interpret tables, charts and graphs.

Use a variety of mathematical methods to solve routine and non-routine problems, including those related to personal financial management.

Use data for decision making.

Apply critical reasoning skills to observations, arguments and conclusions.